



An Interview with Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson

by Michael Tymn

It seems safe to say that there are very few people living today with more experience and knowledge in psychical research and parapsychology than Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson, an 83-year-old resident of Iceland, best remembered for coauthoring, with Dr. Karlis Osis, *At the Hour of Death*, a cross-cultural study, in India and the United States, of the experiences of dying patients, first published in 1977. Among other books and papers, he is the author of *Modern Miracles: The Story of Sathya Sai Baba* (1986), and *The Departed Among the Living* (2012). His latest book, coauthored with Loftur Gissurarson, *Indridi Indridason: The Icelandic Physical Medium* is due for release during September by White Crow Books.

After studying psychology at the University of Freiburg and the University of Munich, Haraldsson became a research fellow at the Rhine Institute in the University of Virginia, and then received his Ph.D. from the University of Freiburg. I recently put some questions to him by email:

Dr. Haraldsson, how did you become interested in psychical research/parapsychology?

"My first and primarily love was philosophy with a thirst to know more about the world around me – and not less – and to know what I was and the nature of that mysterious evasive "I." I felt I did not understand either.

"When I was around 15, I became like reborn to myself, and became aware of some inner reality that was also mysteriously external, and so immensely greater than anything I had experienced or been aware of before. It started suddenly in heavy rain during the middle of the day, near some banks of pebbles on the seashore that lit up as the sun suddenly shone and reflected on them. Then I had the experience of being filled with light that was immensely delightful and beyond words. After a while this faded away but a vivid trace of it remained with me forever after and would sometimes – especially in my youth – sweep over me again. After that there

was never a doubt that there existed a superior/supernatural reality that was sometimes closer and sometimes further away from my normal self. Somehow the two were connected, but how?

"When I was old enough to enter university there was no question as to what to study, namely philosophy, which I had anyway been reading about for a long time, not only the traditional academic philosophers but also the unorthodox: the Danish Martinus, Tibetan texts, Brunton, Ouspensky and theosophical writings, to name some.

"I spent four years on academic philosophy; in Copenhagen, in Edinburgh and two years in Freiburg. By the end of that period I felt I knew how matters stand with philosophy and that it was time to start something new. What philosophy taught me were the limitations to what we can know. Yes, we were homo sapiens, but primarily homo ignorance. And that, in spite of all that science has revealed, and which is immeasurably valuable to us."



Haraldsson

Did your philosophy education include psychical research?

"Until this time I had not been particularly interested in psychic phenomena though I had experienced my share of them. In Freiburg I became aware of them as an interesting research area. Professor Hans Bender gave a course on parapsychology that was popular with students. He aroused my scientific interest.

"I returned to Iceland to work and earn money, mostly as a journalist. I edited one book about an Icelandic psychic who was also an influential politician, and got into correspondence with J. B. Rhine at Duke University. After some three years in Iceland I was off again, first to Berlin where the iron wall had just been built. Then I traveled for a year-and-a-half through the Middle East and Asia and wrote my first book – exclusively travel/political/historical – *With Rebels in Kurdistan*. That was the beginning of a long association with the Kurds which was a whole world apart from philosophy and the paranormal.

"Late 1963, I returned overland from South India, through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey,

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and then took the train from Istanbul to Freiburg. Now the intention was to study psychology. After a few years I obtained a Dipl. Psych. degree and later a Ph. D. with Hans Bender, whom I came to know personally. In the meantime I had on and off continued some correspondence with J. B. Rhine who invited me over to his Institute of Parapsychology after I had completed my Dipl. Psych. degree. Rhine's institute was the Mecca of parapsychology at this time. With Rhine I stayed for a year and conducted my first two experiments both of which got published in due time.

"From then on I became more and more involved with research into the paranormal. There followed a year of internship in clinical psychology at the University of Virginia with Robert van de Castle, the dream researcher, and Prof. Ian Stevenson. With Stevenson I conducted my first studies of mediumship. From him I learned a lot. The medium was Hafsteinn Björnsson (1915-1977). Stevenson and Van de Castle became life-long friends and I wrote a tribute to both when they passed away.

"And I was lucky. As my time at the University of Virginia was coming to the end, Karlis Osis, director of research of the American Society for Psychical Research, invited me to join him on a major study of deathbed visions which he was planning. I gladly accepted. For comparative purposes this project was conducted in India as well as in the United States. It involved interviews with over 800 doctors and nurses; it was a highly memorable and interesting experience that had a lasting effect on me.

"Karlis Osis had a deep-seated interest in the question of survival. And what better way to study what may follow when we die – he argued – than to investigate the experiences people have just before they die? That is, when they find themselves on the threshold between life and death."

Is there any one case you have been involved with that stands out in your mind as especially convincing?

"The case of the fire in Copenhagen in 1905, described by the medium Indridi Indridason (1883-1912) and the Danish communicator Emil Jensen, immediately comes to mind. At this time there was no telephone or radio communication across the wide Atlantic Ocean between Iceland and the rest of Europe. News arrived only by ship. This remarkable case reminds me of Swedenborg's remote description of the fire in Stockholm when he was in



Gothenburg. However, the Indridason/Jensen case is much better documented. Not only that. Over a century after it occurred I was able to trace Emil Jensen (1848-1898) by searching census records and archives in Copenhagen. Everything that Emil Jensen had said about his life in 1905, seven years after he had passed away, was proved correct. Jensen had lived in the Great King Street most of his life and there the fire had broken out, namely close to his home as in the case of Swedenborg."

What has been the highlight of your career?

"The study of deathbed visions with Karlis Osis was the first such highlight. After lots of interviews, fieldwork and analyses we wrote *At the Hour of Death*, which has since appeared in some 20 editions/translations. It was last published in 2012 by White Crow Books. It is still the most extensive study conducted of deathbed visions.

"Deathbed visions are rather common among the dying. Deceased loved ones, friends and relatives appear to some of the dying in their last hours. They express the purpose that they have come to take the patient away into the realm of the dying. And when that happens the dying are happy to go. They experience being received by their loved ones.

"Was it all hallucinatory? We gathered as best we could information about each patient's medication, temperature, the nature of his/her disease, etc., in short all that might possibly produce hallucinations. The analyses of this great body of data did not support the hypothesis that the bulk of the deathbed visions was caused by hallucinatory factors. That being rejected we were left with the survival side of our model of what happens in deathbed visions.

"My surveys of psychic experiences and apparitions of the dead in Iceland (*The Departed Among the Living*) is another of my favorite projects. The great European Values Study had revealed that 25 percent of the population of Western Europe had personally 'felt that they had really been in touch with someone who had died.' In the USA this figure was 30 percent. What had these people experienced? We sought answers by interviewing 450 persons who reported that they had experienced an encounter with someone who had died.

"Another highlight was my study of Sathya Sai Baba, whom I first learned about during the study of deathbed visions in India. Equally – perhaps more important – is my research of childrens' claims of past-life memories that Stevenson encouraged me to conduct. On that I have written numerous papers and book chapters.

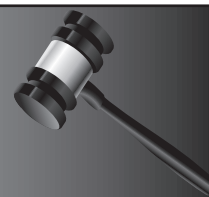
"Then – of course – very prominent for me are my studies of the mediumship of Indridi Indridason, about whom I have now written a book. Also my

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President's Message

The nature of the transpsychic reality of the psyche touches on the realm of nuclear physics and the conception of the space-time continuum.— C. G. Jung



How Therapy That Calms The Vagal Nerve System Can Increase Spiritual Energy!

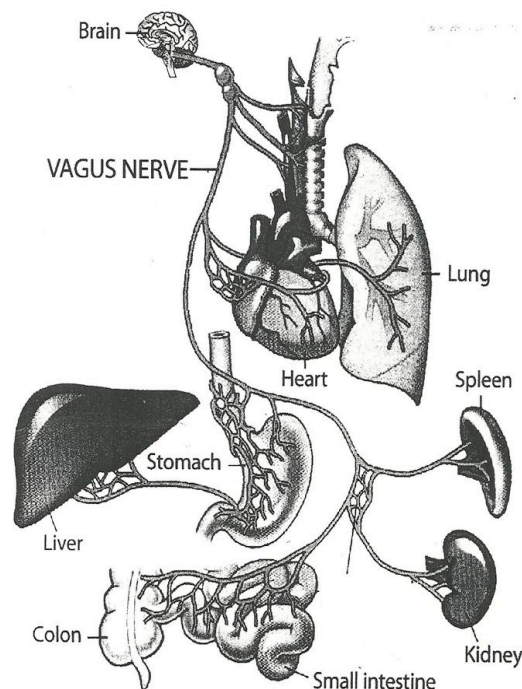
Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a comprehensive, integrative psychotherapy approach. EMDR works for many of my clients who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Such trauma is mainly caused by feeling trapped. It stops positive and spiritual energy from being experienced by those people who have suffered from panic attacks, anxiety disorders, depression and/or PTSD.

It's important to know that the trauma is about the entire organism. The body continues to relive the trauma as if the issue hasn't stopped. Sounds and smells in the environment can make a body respond as if it's just happening all over again. EMDR works because it allows clients to process their memories. It has been known to work even when someone is not calm because the bilateral eye process still appears to consolidate memory.

A client experiencing EMDR therapy will wear headphones that transmit music and produces bilateral stimulation of the brain. As the client is listening to the music and talking to the therapist simultaneously, the therapist at times stops the client and repeats a phrase while holding a finger in front of the client's eyes. The client follows this finger back and forth with his or her eye movements. This allows the limbic memories to gradually be processed by the prefrontal cortex leading to rational thought and calmness in present day memory. EMDR has been used significantly with Vietnam veterans, domestic violence and sexual abuse cases with much success.

Now we have a research theory by Dr. Stephen Porges, who discusses the vagus nerve in his book *The Polyvagal Theory Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment Communication, Self-Regulation* (2011) and states that the vagus nerve is part of the parasympathetic system of the brain. It is attached to both sides of the brain stem and travels from the abdomen to the brain, affecting the colon, intestines, kidney, liver, stomach, spleen, heart, and lungs. It is ubiquitous, meaning that it exists everywhere at the same time and has universal knowledge of the body. It is what is affected when the body is in the FFF (frozen, fright and flight) sensations of trauma.

There are three strands of the vagal nerve in Porges' theory and research. The first is the limbic



Vagal Nerve System

or "play dead" which is the most primitive. This is where you see clients who are numbed out. The second strand is the reptile brain. This is the flight or fight strand. The third strand is the socio-receptive or balanced present state where the vagal nerve, adrenaline and the thoughts are in balance.

Most therapy takes place in PTSD or in a very anxious person in this latter strand. Here people know or can tell themselves whether the danger is real or is just being triggered. Almost all relaxation techniques calm the vagal nerve. The Poly Vagal Theory only proposed a reason that they do so and explained the three-prong stages that help us account for why clients seem to act in different ways with trauma and why they often cannot incorporate the "words" of therapy.

This self-regulation nerve system can manage the body from the bottom up. During EMDR

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Searchlight Media Watch



by Tom and Lisa Butler, NST



Mediumship Study: A study done by the Institute of Noetic Science (IONS), and funded by BIAL, investigated the mental activity of mediums as they were tasked with communication with the deceased. The mediums were guided to experience four distinct mental states: thinking about a known living person (recollection), listening to a biography (perception), thinking about an imaginary person (fabrication) and interacting mentally with a known deceased person (communication). The reason for such a protocol is that skeptics will often argue that the mediumship mental state is akin to making up an imaginary person or remembering previously obtained information. Electrochemical activity was measured during each state. Reliable (i.e., statistically significant) differences among the four conditions were found in all participants. These data suggest that the mediumship state is a subjective experience with brain correlates that are distinctly different from activities like recollection, perception or fabrication. In other words, from this empirical foundation it appears that mediums are involved in a process that cannot be explained as imagination or some other form of known recall.

From: *New Study Sheds Light on Brain States During Mediumship Readings*, by Alan Pierce, Noetic Now, 2013, noetic.org/blog/

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Shared Deathbed Visions (SDEs): Dr. Raymond Moody has been studying reports of how people nearing the moment of their transition sometimes indicate the presence of discarnate loved ones. He reports that those visions are sometimes shared by friends and family who are present. The “Shared

Death Study” (Shareddeathstudy.org) is the global shared death experience research study and story repository site.

Moody writes: “It is the study of these experiences that may finally prove life after death.” It is the aim of SharedDeathStudy.org to collect as many shared death experience stories from all over the world, in as many languages as possible. When participants add their stories, they are asked a specially designed list of questions that will help researcher cross-compare accounts to better understand this amazing phenomenon. Another interesting discussion board regarding this phenomenon is the Deathbed Visions pages at: allnurses.com/general-nursing-discussion/death-bed-visions-301825.html

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Conscious Aging: The final third phase of life is a great opportunity for spiritual, emotional and psychological growth. It’s a time to celebrate a life journey, to harvest the wisdom of those experiences, and to share what was meaningful in the company of others. And yet in our youth-obsessed culture there is a lot of fear and anxiety about growing older, especially for those who enter their later years alone. Recognizing this, the Institute of Noetic Sciences has developed a program specifically for facilitators who want to work with seniors ready to embrace this phase of their journey. This program is called *Conscious Aging*. It was created over four years, and field-tested across a broad range of practitioners and settings.



If you are interested in being a facilitator for this program, please see noetic.org/education/conscious-aging/.

Praise for IONS’ Conscious Aging Program from Nan Merrick Phifer, author of *Memoirs of the Soul: A Writing Guide* writes, “This program gently leads participants toward compassionate self-understanding. Though written for people past midlife, it is a guide for all mature people who seek connectedness and inner peace, for it identifies those qualities in oneself that bring about fulfillment.”

From: Conscious Aging Workshops Facilitator Training Program, noetic.org/education/conscious-aging/

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Meditation's Benefits: In recent years meditation practice, derived from various branches of Buddhism, has made its way into the secular world as a means of promoting calmness and general well-being. Three common forms of meditation—fo-



ocused attention, mindfulness and compassion—are now practiced everywhere, from hospitals to schools, and have increasingly become an object of scrutiny in scientific laboratories worldwide.

Physiological changes in the brain, such as an altered volume of tissue in some areas, have been shown to occur through meditation. Practitioners also experience beneficial psychological effects: they react faster to stimuli and are less prone to various forms of stress. A recent article in *Scientific American* magazine claimed meditation is like Valium and Oxycontin without the side effects.

From: *Neuroscience Reveals the Secrets of Meditation's Benefits*, by Matthieu Ricard, Antoine Lutz and Richard J. Davidson, *Scientific American*, November 2014

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Dogmatic Materialism: Grahame Mackenzie interviewed Professor John Poynton of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in December for a *Spirit Today* article. Professor Poynton takes a critical view of the dogmatic materialism promoted both by current science and by current philosophy and has helped many people break free from the chains of materialism through his books, his teachings and motivational talks.

Poynton says that “True skepticism *does* allow facts to guide conclusions; it is the false skepticism of debunkers that accepts no guidance from facts, because such people ‘know’ the answers already.” He says that the SPR has consistently met closed doors when trying to interest the media in some event or idea.

In his inaugural address of 1882 to the SPR, Professor Henry Sidgwick said, “It is a scandal that the dispute as to the reality of [psychic] phenomena should still be going on, that so many competent witnesses should have declared their belief in them, that so many others should be profoundly interested in having the question determined, and yet the educated world, as a body, should still be simply in an attitude of incredulity.”

This “attitude of incredulity” is resistant to facts and argument and is maintained aggressively in academia, the media and things like Wikipedia.

From: *Interview with Professor John Poynton of the So-*

ciety for Psychical Research, by Grahame Mackenzie, *Spirit Today*, 2013, spiritoday.com/ interview-with-professor-john-poynton-of-the-society-for-psychical-research/

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Scientists Call for More Psi Research Funding: Some 90 scientists and academics have co-signed a letter, written by Etzel Cardeña of Lund University and published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, that calls for more mainstream support of open and honest investigation of parapsychological topics, and related mysteries of human consciousness. Cardena points out that this type of research has continued for over a century despite the taboo against investigating the topic, despite almost complete lack of funding, and professional and personal attacks; results supporting the validity of psi phenomena continue to be published in peer-reviewed, academic journals in relevant fields from psychology to neuroscience to physics; more than 20 Nobel prizewinners and many other eminent scientists have supported the study of psi or even conducted research themselves; and, meta-analyses and other studies suggest that data supportive of psi phenomena cannot reasonably be accounted for by chance.

From: *Scientists Call For Open, Informed Study of Psi Effects and Consciousness*, Posted by Greg 13 Jan 2014 at dailygrail.com/Fresh-Science/2014/1/Scientists-Call-Open-Informed-Study-Psi-Effects-and-Consciousness

Atheists have image problem

According to a May 19 article at *Live Science* (<http://www.livescience.com/>) by Stephanie Pappas, American atheists have an image problem and rank among the lowest of the low in the court of American public opinion.

Pappas cites a study carried out at the University of Washington, Tacoma by Corey Cook, a social psychologist. Cook concluded that the primary reason for the low opinion of atheists is that “thinking about atheists reminds people of death” and puts them in a negative frame of mind.

The article further states that atheists are perceived as not having values, without morals, untrustworthy, threatening, and un-American. Pappas refers to an earlier study suggesting that “people found atheists as equally untrustworthy as rapists.”

Also involved in the study were Sheldon Solomon or Skidmore College in New York and Florette Cohen of the College of Staten Island, CUNY. Pappas states that the study involved 236 students at the College of Staten Island, 65 percent of whom were Christian, the balance being Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, or another faith. Interestingly, there is no indication that any one of the 236 was an atheist.

— MET

Paranormal Back Pages (Part III)

Sir Oliver Lodge Takes the Stand

by Rick Darby

William Faulkner famously said, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." If only that were true concerning the research, accounts of personal experience, and theories about psychical phenomena! Unfortunately, most such books and articles have a brief shelf life. Some still deserve our attention. This series offers brief discussions of works about paranormal mental phenomena that have fallen into obscurity.

For many decades, a kind of continental drift has drawn apart two world views: over here, scientific materialism and a "this world" orientation denying or ignoring other levels of reality; there, exploration of psychic and spiritual realms. Most people inhabit one or the other with little crossover. But even in relatively modern times that wasn't so much the case.

In the February 1917 *North American Review*, Lawrence Gilman reviewed Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond, or Life and Death*. That book by a distinguished man of science described in detail the communication via mediumship between him and his son Raymond, who had recently been killed in battle during the Great War.

Raymond has become a classic in the literature of psychical research and continues to be cited. What was special about Gilman's review that warrants noting it again? Aside from its perceptive and thoughtful tone, the significance is that Gilman was *not* involved in paranormal research. He was not even primarily a book critic. His specialty was classical music.

A music critic and managing editor for *Harper's Weekly*, he continued his work at the *New York Herald Tribune*, one of the city's leading papers. He regularly contributed music and arts reviews to the *North American Review*. A dozen of his books were published between 1904 and 1938.

The review of *Raymond* was headed, "The Book of the Month: Sir Oliver Lodge Takes the Stand." Gilman briefly describes the circumstances of the séances that provided the book's material, and quickly introduces a fantastic-seeming quote from Raymond's presumed spirit. "At this point you come upon an interjected note from Sir Oliver which will variously affect the readers of *Raymond*," Gilman writes. "'A good deal of this,' remarks Sir Oliver, 'struck me as nonsense; as if Feda [the 'control'] had picked it up from some sitter. But I went on recording what was said.'"

The scientific focus on the phenomena, whatever Lodge's own opinions might have been, impressed Gilman. That "matter-of-fact air," the "attitude of candor and detachment," would be reassuring to open-minded readers. Gilman continued, "For the vacuous and indolent sensationalist, for those whose

attitude toward this subject is merely one of bigotry and obscurantism, this trait will be disconcerting: for there is little sport to be derived from ridiculing the exhibit of an investigator who has been so unaccommodating as to checkmate you by ridiculing it himself. ...

"Anyone less intellectually honorable in his relation to the matter than Sir Oliver would have suppressed certain pages whose exhibition is as



Sir Oliver Lodge

creditable to his candor as it is unmistakable in its declaration of a serene indifference to the braying of the herd at his expense. There is no more heartening aspect of this singularly touching book than its author's scrupulously impersonal attitude toward implications of the utmost personal concern to himself."

The reviewer especially had in mind certain details that Raymond described of life in the afterworld, which many readers found ludicrous. Among them were that he had grown a new tooth, an acquaintance had acquired a new limb, and bodies that had been blown up on the battlefield required some time to reassemble themselves. The most famous and derided claims concerned spirits relaxing with astral cigars and whiskey.

Since *Raymond's* publication, we have been given information that, if true, helps make sense of such phenomena. Some spirits have spoken of various levels or divisions of postmortem existence, each appropriate to a soul's development. "The human mind would be unlikely to retain any sanity if in the afterlife it was abruptly translated into an existence devoid of any of the familiar landmarks by which it orientates itself in the physical world," writes David Fontana. "The departed can only make sense of their new experiences if they find themselves in a world resembling in important respects the one left behind, just as we expect a familiar world to greet us when we open our eyes each morning." Such an earthlike state seems to be created by the mind of the dead person, or a group with similar tastes. Frederic Myers, communicating through the medium Geraldine Cummins, called this sphere — which he said was one of seven — the Plane of Illusion.

However that may be, Gilman praises above all Sir Oliver's very fine net through which he requires all claims to pass, his frequent skepticism, his refusal to bow to sentimentality. Gilman adds, "[Sir Oliver believes] the change called death brings a change of circumstances to the individual, but only in the sense that he is now aware of a different group of facts: the change of surroundings is a subjective one. There is, he says, no 'other' world; the universe is one."

MEDIUMSHIP

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studies and experiments with the mental medium Hafsteinn Björnsson.

"All these major projects are summed up in my autobiography that still exists only in Icelandic. Many of these studies offer challenging evidence for survival of death and the existence of a supernatural reality that have to be considered seriously."

What did you find most interesting about the mediumship of Indridason?

"Most remarkable were the frequent phenomena of direct voices. And sometimes there were two voices – a female soprano and male bass voice – singing together. The direct-voice phenomenon is rare with mediums but was more common with Indridi Indridason than any other kind of phenomenon, and was also observed outside his séances and in full daylight. There were also massive movements and levitations of objects and the medium, and frequent appearance of lights in various forms and colors, sometimes with a human form appearing in a pillar of light. All the classical forms of physical mediumship were there in a country where they had never been observed before.

"The group round Indridi Indridason – the Experimental Society – consisted mostly of academics who took all thinkable precautions to prevent the possibility of fraud, which Indridi gladly accepted, and still the phenomena continued."

We don't seem to have the same quality of mediumship today that we had in Indridi's day. Do you have any ideas as to why this is?

"Some psychic/spiritual phenomena appear epidemic. They have their primary period and purpose and after a while we may only find traces of them. But they may turn up again."

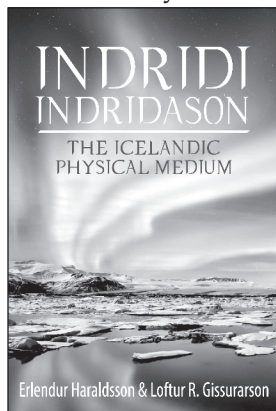
Are you fully retired now or are you still doing research?

"Formally retired but as busy as ever, writing papers and books, and lecturing frequently in many countries as can be seen on my homepage: www.hi.is/~erlendur/english. Retirement can be a very fruitful and productive time as one is then relieved of all teaching and administrative duties."

What is the general worldview in Iceland?

"National surveys reveal widespread belief and experiences of the paranormal to about the same degree as in Italy and the U.S., but considerably

higher than in the rest of Europe. About 70 percent of the population believe in an afterlife, which is about the same percentage as in the U.S. and Ireland and considerably higher than in the rest of Europe. Some people go to church but to a much lower extent than in the United States. Funerals are particularly well attended."



Haraldsson on Super-Psi & Further Research

"With the researches of the 19th and 20th centuries there emerged considerable empirical findings that are relevant for the question of life after death. Even Lucretius would have had a partial answer to his question about memories of previous existences. Scientifically these findings are obviously indicators rather than proofs, but they still represent an important step forward.

"In this area of research there are still many unresolved methodological issues and open question. Among them is the ongoing debate about the merits of the survival hypothesis versus the so-called super-psi hypothesis, which assumes that all evidence for life after death is explainable as due to the psychic abilities of the perceiving individual. This would mean that the experiences of our participants could all be explained by a psychic gift they are assumed to have, rather than to stem from deceased persons that appear to them. The author will not get into this beyond expressing his view that he finds that the super-psi hypothesis fails to adequately explain the motivational (such as expressed purpose) and behavioural features that are an essential part of many apparitional cases. ...

"The fact is that now – in the author's view – there are from different areas of empirical research, rational reasons for taking the possibility of life beyond bodily existence seriously. The time has passed when we only had philosophical and religious arguments.

"Further research – far too little unfortunately, and rather sporadic – is being conducted in some of these areas, particularly on near-death experiences, deathbed-visions and claimed past-life memories...All of these are open for further research and hold promise of new findings that might shed more light on the question of life after death."

– Erlendur Haraldsson, Ph.D.

(*The Departed Among The Living*. pp. 236-238)

Meet the Academy's Officers and Directors

(Fifth in a Series)

Karin Nemri: Finding a Life Purpose in Healing

When Boyce Batey, the Academy's long-time leader before retiring in 2012, first met Karin Nemri in 2004, he changed the topic of conversation from their nursing home advocate training to that of heavenly realms and spiritual beings. After giving his view of things celestial, Boyce asked Karin if she had ever heard of anything like he had described. "Of course I have!" Karin casually replied to a suddenly wide-eyed listener. "There are 77 planes that we function within after we leave our physical bodies." She continued to offer her understanding of the celestial system, including guides, helpers and angels.



Karin Nemri

After listening to Karin, Boyce encouraged her to join the Academy and submit a proposal for the Academy's annual conference. She took him up on it and became the Academy's treasurer in 2005, a position which she still holds. She also serves as the Academy's webmaster.

Growing up in Milford, Connecticut, Karin settled in Bloomfield, outside of Hartford, after marrying. While the marriage ended in divorce, it happily resulted in three children and three grandchildren, with Karin remaining in Bloomfield.

"As a child, I was raised Roman Catholic, although formal religion wasn't big in my family, nor was religion ever discussed," Karin recalls her early exposure to spirituality. "I was, however, sent to catechism classes on Saturday mornings but didn't pay too much attention to what the nuns were trying to teach because my intuitive definition of God was much different than their descriptions. What they taught sounded silly to me and I couldn't relate. I preferred to believe in a loving God and not one who would create thunder, crisis and disasters as a punishment to those who were led astray by devils."

What Boyce Batey didn't know at the time he first met Karin is that, at age 15, she had taken a tour of the heavenly realms during a near-death experience, the result of anorexia and bulimia. "This is when my understanding of my spirituality solidified and began to make a lot more sense to me," Karin relates. "When my heart stopped, I found myself looking down at my emaciated body,

which appeared to be about 15-20 feet below me. I was confused because I was still able to think as I watched my friends trying to revive me...I began noticing an illuminating brightness welling up around me, accompanied by continuous motion and movement. Suddenly, I got caught up in that movement and actually became a part of it while being at one with the light.

Karin then began a telepathic communication with the spiritual beings who had greeted her. "In the process I somehow absorbed enormous amounts of information about this nonphysical realm that I would soon take back to the physical world. Just as I was getting comfortable with the non-physicality of myself and relishing in indescribable feelings of complete love, joy and acceptance that had merged with my being, I was suddenly jolted back into my body. As my physical senses returned to me, I clearly understood that there is a part of us that doesn't die. Since then I have been able to differentiate between the spiritual aspect of myself as it functions both within my physical body as well as beyond it, and all other parts that depend on the physical to function, such as the workings of the brain."

The "beings" then began working with Karin to help her come to terms with and resolve the issues she had struggled with. As she healed from her emotional and physical problems, it became clear that her life purpose would revolve around healing others. She is now a trance medium, and her guides speak through her during counseling sessions, helping clients to touch the root cause of their unresolved issues. A session always begins with an Aiiiji healing treatment which aligns the client's energy field and creates an environment for him to be able to begin to heal his or her own wounds.

In addition to being a Certified Spiritual Counselor, Aiiiji healer and lecturer, Karin has volunteered hundreds of hours of her time with hospice in various nursing homes since 1996. In 2000 she became the chairperson of the Connecticut Affiliate of The Twilight Brigade: *Compassion in Action*, and organized and co-facilitated training for hospice volunteers.

Karin is an accomplished watercolor artist, inspired by the spirit of those living in third world countries facing the challenges of poverty and other adversity. (See her websites at <http://www.soulution-soflight.com/> and <http://www.anafananacardsandgifts.com>) "I have come to understand," Karin says, "that one's potential rides on the joy and light from within."

— MET

Our Book Horizon

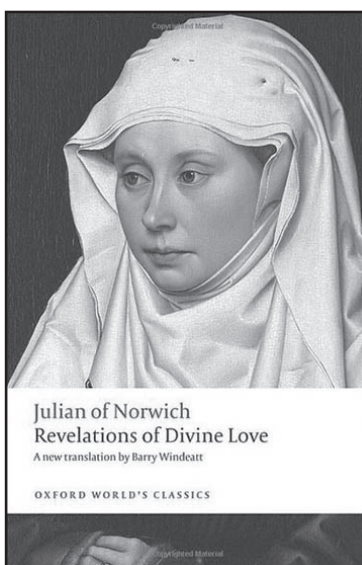
Books are the carriers of civilization. — Barbara Tuchman



Before launching into new books on the horizon, let me encourage ASCS members to join the discussions in progress in our Book Discussions & Reviews forum at <http://ascsi2.ning.com/group/book-reviews>. In the past month, we have had a number of energizing discussions, including the question of mentors with “clay feet”—asking what actions or qualities of a mentor (including book authors) disqualify them to guide us. We have explored the value of studying history, when spiritual practices encourage being in the present. We also have had a very useful discussion of self-publishing—the good, bad, and ugly of it. Please add your opinions to ours at the forum, and raise new questions to explore.

We also roll out announcements of new titles regularly on the discussion forum—and the crop coming on the market in July and August is exceptionally rich with books of interest to our organization. With at least 60 relevant new titles and limited space here, I can illuminate only the most intriguing trends, but will continue to post notices online.

As a historian, I am delighted to see the unusually high attention paid to historical studies related to spirituality in many forms. A new translation of the spiritual revelations of English mystic Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*—part of the World’s Classics series of Oxford University Press—debuted on July 1. On July 24, Inner Traditions released *Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices*, by former Sorbonne professor Claude Lecouteux, which is advertised as “an exploration of the wild spirits that once roamed the lands and inhabited the waters and the pagan rites used to gain their good will.” Western Esotericism expert Tobias Churton’s *Gnostic Mysteries of Sex: Sophia the Wild One and Erotic Christianity* (Inner Traditions), available August 22, promises to “reconstruct the lost world of Gnostic spiritual-erotic experience,” based on the analysis of relevant material in every surviving remnant of Gnostic writing. The list goes on with books on early monasticism, astrology in Ancient Mesopotamia, the paranormal legacy of Abraham Lincoln, a biography of Theosophist Dora van Gelder Kunz, and many more.



This summer’s books also show a marked trend toward subjects of spiritual healing. Available since July 7, allopathic veterinarian Dr. Dennis W. Thomas’s *Whole-Pet Healing: A Heart-to-Heart Guide to Connecting with and Caring for Your Animal Companion* (Hay House) explains the link humans share with their animals, which can influence their healing. Bieke Vandekerckhove’s *The Taste of Silence*

(Liturgical Press, August 15) describes a young woman’s path back from the physical and emotional devastation of ALS in a Benedictine convent. Coming August 8 from Llewellyn Publications, *Psychic* magazine editor Keith Sherwood’s *Energy Healing for Women: Meditations, Mudras, and Chakra Practices to Restore Your Feminine Spirit* offers practices to promote karmic release. Holistic healing techniques and their history are illuminated in *The Shamanic Handbook of Sacred Tools and Ceremonies* (Moon Books, July 31), by “Wisdom-Keeper” Barbara Meiklejohn-Free and natural mystic Flavia Kate Peters. Amazon’s “#1 New Release in Alternative Medicine,” the second edition of *Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis* (Churchill

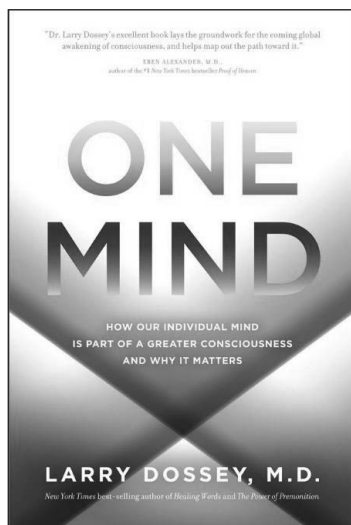
Livingstone), by Dr. James L. Oschman, offers medical professionals information about the way that “energy therapies can normalize physiology,” restoring health to patients. Other titles feature new developments in yoga, solar body healing, Buddhist psychology, and past-life regression therapy.

Let’s wrap up with a special healing title that caught my eye, given a number of the discussions we have had in the online forum about our various spiritual paths. Many of us appear to have our roots in traditional creeds, from which we broke and began searching. Whether we found our way back to traditional forums, joined or founded new ones, or remained independent seekers, the exploration transformed us. Reba Riley’s *Post-Traumatic Church Syndrome: A Memoir of Humor and Healing* (Howard Books) debuts August 18 and will undoubtedly mirror familiar territory for typical ASCS members. To any who read it, please join us online and tell us what you thought of it. Happy reading!

– Donna Cox Baker, Ph.D.
donnacoxbaker@att.net

One Mind: How Our Individual Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters, by Larry Dossey, M.D., Hay House, Inc., Australia, 2013.

As Dr. Larry Dossey was writing about the connection that the human mind has with the mind of animals, normally shy coyotes began to gravitate toward the window of his study in northern New Mexico. Deer and birds and once even a lovely bobcat made the pilgrimage to observe Dossey—creatures he saw as “ambassadors of the web of life,” reminding him that they share with us the One Mind of which he was writing. Magical as it sounds, his book does a remarkable job of demonstrating that the One Mind, rather than mythical or magical, is our nature. A shared consciousness is our norm.



Defining consciousness adequately tends to be a futile exercise, Dossey explains, though cultures worldwide and across time have endeavored. At best, we can demonstrate the manifestation of it—and this is particularly illuminating when applied to cases where sentient beings appear to share thoughts. Dossey has studied the accounts of these manifestations reported by decades of research in the fields of medicine, psychology, physics, and other sciences, alongside personal accounts. He has skillfully compiled and analyzed the most telling ones to demonstrate with great effect the concept he calls One Mind. He claims that the evidence provided in these studies around the world suggest that the One Mind is “a collective, unitary domain of intelligence, of which all individual minds are a part.”

I listened to *One Mind* on Audiobooks, as I drove to and from the office one week, and found it gripping from start to finish. Previously, I had spent little time contemplating theories of “consciousness” in my spiritual quest, and this is an excellent primer for newcomers to the idea. He teaches theory by example. While some scientists might sniff with disapproval at a book that borrows so heavily from anecdotes, most of us outside the laboratory learn best by accounts of the One Mind in action. Dossey interweaves the anecdotes with scientific theories to form a very intellectually satisfying and highly readable book.

He writes within a framework of categories of evidence. He begins with the phenomena of humans

putting their own lives at risk to save others—something that goes counter to the survival instinct. Most significant are the situations in which humans risk all to save a stranger, outside their own group, or when the risk-taking is outside the species, as when an animal saves a human or vice versa. These situations demonstrate a kinship that is beyond conditioning. Further, he shares stories in which the need to care for another manifests in unexpected knowledge. For example, a woman living on the East Coast awoke with the overwhelming conviction that her son, who lived on the other side of the country, was in jeopardy. A string of numbers popped into her head, and she dialed them, reaching the Emergency Room that was treating her injured son.

Dossey challenges the once-ingrained idea among scientists that consciousness is lost when the brain’s activity slows or stops—the assumption being that consciousness is a function of the brain. It is not a loss of consciousness, he says, but the loss of the body’s receptors to consciousness, which creates the appearance that consciousness has ceased. The consciousness is nonlocal, shared beyond the boundaries of our own minds.

Near-death and “near-death-like” experiences (NDEs) and reincarnation memories also yield evidence of the One Mind, according to Dossey. The universalities of NDEs, particularly the recurring concepts of “a Source, a Soul, and a Higher Self,” affirm the presence of the One Mind. With an estimated 800 persons experiencing NDEs per day in the U.S. alone, 37 percent of whom are neither sick nor dying, we cannot consider these phenomena either rare or anecdotal. NDEs happen to people of all backgrounds, whether religious or not. In some cases, the person dying and a loved one experience the spiritual opening to other realms of thought simultaneously. These experiences erase boundaries, creating a profound sense of unity with everything. Verifiable reincarnation memories raise further evidence that our consciousness is nonlocal.

One Mind also demonstrates the unitary nature of healing, group psychology, and other experiences. Dossey illuminates the work of such thinkers as Joseph Campbell, Arthur Schopenhauer, Erwin Schrödinger, William James, Carl Jung, David Bohm, Raymond Moody, and Ian Stevenson, offering new students of consciousness a concise introduction to the minds that have conceived, tested, and often disagreed over the nature of consciousness.

I found Dossey’s *One Mind* to be an excellent use of my time and a foundation for further study. It has inspired me to seek out his earlier works, including *Healing Words* and *The Power of Premonition*, both of which were *New York Times* best-sellers. I encourage ASCS members to read Larry Dossey’s fine work.

– Donna Cox Baker, Ph.D.
donnacoxbaker@att.net

Adventures in Psychical Research: A Medical Doctor's Exploration of the Nature of Consciousness and Its Survival to Bodily Death
by Piero Calvi-Pariseti, Foreword by Gary E. Schwartz, CreateSpace, 2015, 228 pp.

"Blogging is to literature what graffiti is to visual arts," admits Scottish-Italian doctor and psychotherapist Piero Calvi-Pariseti, as he introduces this collection of 57 of his blogs supporting afterlife beliefs. Each pithy article illuminates a particular subject, supported by scientific psychical research. He reconciles reincarnation with the existence of discarnate personalities and covers overcoming grief; the mind/brain relationship; psi; psychic mediums; Electronic Voice Phenomena, and more, including Dr. Raymond Moody's fascinating "Psychomanteum." Each topic reveals research that offers proof of survival after death, "not as a matter of faith or wishful thinking, but based on masses of compelling evidence," insists Parisetti.



He built his grief-counseling practice upon this evidence, insisting that cultivating a belief in an afterlife offers immediate relief to the bereaved and dying. He designed his unique practice with "afterlife

education" at the heart, embracing a "no-compromise" approach. "Just rattle the cage and tell the bereaved and the dying that death as we commonly think of it doesn't exist—not as a matter of faith or wishful thinking, but based on masses of compelling evidence." As renowned consciousness pioneer Gary E. Schwartz aptly notes in his foreword, "[He doesn't] pull punches and tells it as he sees it." Parisetti's passion is compelling, because he backs his reasoning with evidence.

He fearlessly challenges Elisabeth Kübler Ross's well-known "stages of grief" concept as outdated, then takes on the biblical conventions that keep people in mourning. "I feel passionately about this problem. ... I had the painful experience of accompanying my dearest friend in a three-year dramatic battle with cancer. What was painful was certainly not being at my friend's side during those difficult times. ... What I simply cannot stand is the idea that he died an anguished man. A committed Catholic, he was convinced that he was going to face judgment for sins he believed he had committed."

Pariseti cares deeply about these topics, as evidenced throughout, and his passion and enthusiasm for psychical research proves engaging and highly contagious. His book is a heart-felt, fact-filled, fast-paced, entertaining read that will appeal to all seekers of knowledge regarding the realities of an afterlife.

— Sharon R. Allen, MFA
Artshare4@mac.com

Walking in Light: The Everyday Empowerment of a Shamanic Life by Sandra Ingerman, Sounds True (Louisville, CO), 241 pp.

How can we use spiritual practices to heal a disturbed world, to "grow corn" as some shamanic teachers put it? When I was a teenager, a group from our church visited a house that some lay people had rented to serve people in the neighborhood. One of the residents seemed to glow with a golden light, and when we asked her what she did specifically for the ministry, she said, "I just work at *being* a Christian, that's the important thing." My analytical mind said, "Yeah," but my soul felt a profound truth.

That experience has stayed with me a long time, and it was not until I read the book under review that I understood why. The mystics have been saying for centuries that divine light can heal our environment, but the few who listened didn't know how to pull it off without going to a monastery or ashram. *Walking in Light* gets us started by spelling out both theory and practice from a shamanic perspective. "It is who you become that changes the world," writes the author, "not just what you do."

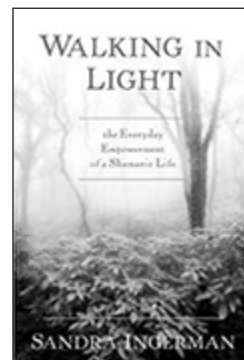
Sound too idealistic? No, says the author, with concrete and specific language—a welcome change from the saccharine affirmations of pop psychology and New Age fluffery. Her exercises to transmute negative energy into the loving kindness of healing

light are simple, pertinent, wise, and field-tested over decades. I never thought of such innovative and interesting practices as incubating a healing dream or journeying to the Spirit of My Town. The reader can't help but believe that the exercises really *can* stop us from polluting the global psychospiritual commons with our pathological toxins. By showing us how to cultivate our inner world to change the outer one, the author narrows the gap between creed and deed.

Nor is she shy about sharing her shamanic journeying to her spirit helpers, who bring delightfully tough-love messages from the Other Side. Her stories from her own professional practice as a shamanic counselor ring uncannily true. Anonymous stories about her students add realistic grit to the lofty ideal. Our overstressed distracted postmodern urbanites will find this volume anything but tedious.

Walking in Light, then, merges shamanism and mysticism into a seamless whole. If this idea catches on, the world will be changed at the cellular level. So, if you're collecting books on alternative spiritualities, this volume belongs on your shelf. If you're not, get it anyway.

— David Kowalewski, Ph.D.



In the Light of Death: Experiences on the Threshold between Life and Death by Ineke Koedam, White Crow Books, Hove, U.K., 2015, 174 pp.

As “death” becomes less of an unmentionable topic, many books covering various aspects of this complex subject are appearing on the market. Ineke Koedam’s *In the Light of Death* presents numerous accounts of those who watch the death process first-hand and often. She offers the experiences in a simple and straightforward way, making it suitable for anyone to read, whatever their level of prior knowledge or belief.

I found the whole book took me through the stages of passing over in an enlightening way. A quote by Hans Biedermann from a chapter specifically on Light moved me: “Light is the global symbol of divinity, of the spiritual element which flowed through the All after the primordial chaos of darkness and showed its boundaries to the shadows.” As Koedam comments, light plays a vital role in almost every religious or mystic tradition.

The book contains anecdotal information on end-of-life experiences (ELEs) reported by hospice caregivers from the Netherlands, in their own words with the author’s observations woven around them. Koedam writes, “In most cases ELEs are seen as being able to alleviate spiritual suffering and deep sorrow that will ease the transition into death.” Most of the caregivers work as volunteers, often having had a personal experience of a loved one passing over, and their approach is inspiring. Koedam, herself a hospice caregiver, has visited a number of other hospices and interviewed caregivers from them all to form the body of this study.

Like most people, I know little about hospice care, but having read these accounts, it seems like a wonderful way to end your days on earth. The emphasis throughout the book is on “death” being a process that we work through, as opposed to an event or end. Koedam incorporates numerous accounts of patients describing who they “see” visiting them to offer help from Spirit. In some cases, the caregivers ask the patients if they can see their loved ones joining them from Spirit, and learn that various relatives are with them. About a day and a half before she passed over, one patient asked her granddaughter to pack her bag as her husband was waiting for her! Other patients have felt the need to heal rifts within families before they go, and

this is very satisfying for everyone, including the caregivers.

The caregivers seem to develop an intuition about whether or not they should sit with patients who are close to passing. In many cases, they choose to spend time with them simply as a presence, which is particularly important for those who have no family or friends with them during their transition.

This intuition also extends to the time after passing—while preparing the body for burial or cremation—because the caregivers tend to believe that the spirit can linger for a while after the patient’s final breath. I found the respect and love with which the caregivers treat these patients to be touching and inspiring. In fact, as Koedam comments in her chapter on Hospice Caregivers’ Experiences, “There are also people who want to grow, to develop themselves, who want to take a step towards inner growth.” So, as with everything in life, the benefits extend to those who give as well as those who receive. Using their intuition in this way is all part of this growth.

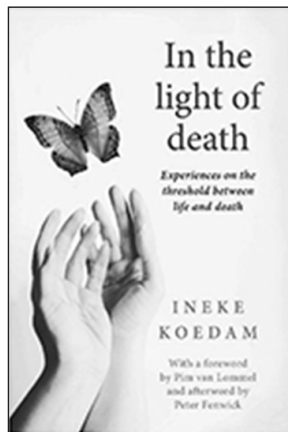
As I was reading the book, however, I found myself thinking that in fact this ethic offers a model for the way we need to treat one another throughout our lives, if we are to develop spiritually and emotionally. It is simply a matter of being aware of and sensitive to others’ feelings and beliefs without intruding on their lives.

Throughout the book, the accounts generate a feeling that hospices seamlessly interweave the three levels of care—emotional, spiritual and practical—so that everything is calm and well ordered. The information given in the chapter on the “Physical Aspects of Death,” in particular, offers a sensitive and practical description of the natural effects of death on the body and how to deal with them. This provides a valuable supplement to the emotional and spiritual aspects mainly discussed in the rest of the book.

In the Afterword of the book, Dr. Peter Fenwick, an authority on near-death experiences, states that “we are now moving out of the phase where medical personnel consider the experiences of the dying to reflect pathology rather than having a meaning of their own.”

Although many can and often do view “death” as a distressing event, this book emphasizes the fact that dying is a natural part of life and needs to be treated as such. *In the Light of Death* is well written in a plain style that makes it all the more helpful. Rather surprisingly and to my relief, I did not find this a depressing book to read. Instead, I think, it will give hope and comfort to the very many people who fear this normal conclusion to just one stage in our long journey of spiritual development.

—Howard A. Jones, Ph.D.
Jones.ha@btopenworld.com

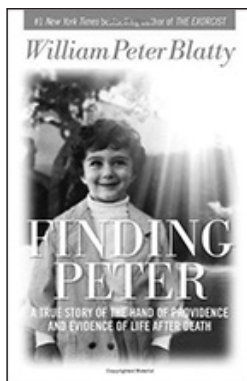


Finding Peter: A True Story of the Hand of Providence and Evidence of Life after Death, by William Peter Blatty, Regnery Publishing, Washington, D.C., 2015, 256 pp.

The reader looking for *hard* evidence of life after death will not find it in this book. At most, it is very *soft* and definitely would not convince the skeptic, at least the more closed-minded ones. In fact, only the last of the 13 chapters really deals with “signs” that the author’s deceased son, Peter, was trying to let them know that he still lives on in another reality. As Blatty admits, the book is not intended as *Ghostbusters Five*.

Most of the book is autobiographical, the author being a long-time screenwriter, most remembered and celebrated for his 1971 book, *The Exorcist*, which was turned into an award-winning horror movie in 1973. However, while the title of the book is somewhat misleading and the spirit contact portion much less than one might anticipate, I found the book very entertaining, especially made so by the author’s quirky humor.

Blatty begins by explaining why he uses “Providence” rather than God. It is “the sneaky



‘spitball’ word you can safely use in place of ‘God’ these days without some atheist or the ACLU or ‘Satanists for Justin Bieber’s Right to Exist’ wanting to haul you into court or to denounce you as a putz of intergalactic standing afflicted by toenail fungus of the mind, because to them the existence of You-Know-Who helps make the case that we are endowed with souls.”

Beginning with his boyhood in Brooklyn, Blatty then touches upon the highlights of his life, showing how “Providence” often directed his path while wondering “What if?” For example, what if he had not gone to Georgetown and had not taken the course in theology in which he learned about demonic possession? “If it wasn’t Providence at work, what was it?” he asks, alluding to his most famous book.

After Peter transitioned during November 2006, the various “signs” began. “The grief, the searing ache of loss remains even when we believe there is really no death,” Blatty concludes, “because what is missing, I think, is the knowledge that our loved ones, as Cardinal Newman wrote, are not off somewhere having fun without us in a dark matter ‘Playland’ some 17 billion light years away, but in fact remain with us, and it is unrelenting evidence of the truth of this which is the gift that Peter has given to me and Julie again and again over the past eight years.”

– Michael Tymn

As One Ghost to Another

“I send out my thought to your mind and it fuses with yours, and then you and I produce words together, which you, or rather we, write with your hand,” the anonymous spirit communicating with John Scott of England stated, as documented in Scott’s 1948 book, *As One Ghost to Another*. “There is no way of describing to you with your present knowledge the intricate process of communication.”

In the preface of the book, Scott states that he had previously regarded such things as “a pathetic delusion provoking humour in the daily press and anger in the churches.” However, after he had retired to the country, he began experimenting with psychic matters and soon found that in his right hand a “vague urge.” When he allowed his muscles to collaborate with the urge, he found his hand scrawling across the paper under it line after line in the semblance of writing. After some experimenting and practice the words became legible and made much sense.

At some point in the discourse, Scott asked his communicator why more spirits do not communicate in such a manner. “There are a few who at first return and communicate through your mediums, but their experience does not encourage them; in fact

they soon despair of effecting any notable good,” the communicating spirit told him, going on to inform him that it is very difficult to find minds which have the ability to receive such communication.

“I think I may say that most of them become thus absorbed [with their new environment], to the exclusion of all thought of earth,” the communicating spirit further told Scott, also mentioning that absolutely no communication comes through without a portion of error, which further frustrates communication.

Scott concluded the preface of his book with the comment that the product of his hand has been laughed at by family and friends, while doctors have diagnosed him as suffering from a morbid state of schizophrenia. “I have broken into the shadowy abode of the suggested subconscious, seeking ‘compensation for frustration’ and ‘escape,’ thus letting loose an actor to simulate two dead persons, one not known to me at all and the other through hearsay,” Scott wryly summarized one medical opinion.

“Meanwhile,” he ended, “I remain the ordinary human animal of social routine, distinguished from the herd merely by the label.”

– MET

NERVE

From page 2

therapy, as the client is listening to music with eye movement that helps to connect both sides of the brain, the vagal nerve is also calming the different parts of the body from the abdomen to the brain.

Clients with whom I have used this have experienced much success in their treatment. Several of them are now meditating using the vagal nerve illustration along with affirmations to balance mind and body as they imagine the different parts of their body responding in perfect balance with their thoughts.

For instance: Your respiratory system gives you the ability to take in life and bring it in perfect balance. Your stomach holds nourishment and digests ideas, hopefully with ease. Your heart beats to the rhythm of love and security. The love, peace and joy of your heart calms the liver, which is the seat of anger and primitive emotions. Kidneys can be told that only divine right action is always taking place in your life. The intestines are told to easily assimilate and absorb all that one needs to know and to release the past with joy. The spleen is told to love and approve of the person, which hopefully stops obsessive thoughts. The colon is told that it can let go of that which is over.

We in the therapeutic field are learning that neurobiology can be synthesized with our thera-

peutic concepts as evidence in the recent research of Van der Kolk, Porges, Le Doux and others which connect trauma and anxiety issues to neurological and brain functioning as well as providing new treatment interventions to assist clients in how to de-stress physically so they can truly participate in a body, mind and soul healing thus increasing the positive energy in their bodies.

– Karen E. Herrick, Ph.D.
karen@karenherrick.com

Ponder on This

“Too many of us get more dissatisfaction out of the absence of what we want, than we get satisfaction out of its presence. We take the good things too much as mere rights, and the bad things as positive wrongs; whereas the truth is that the bad things bring us at least half our education—half and probably more than half of what makes us intelligent and moral beings. In answer to Carlyle’s contemptuous question: ‘Who says you have a right to be happy?’ we may with much reason answer: ‘The powers that made me without consulting me.’ Yet, there is such a thing as insisting too strenuously on that right... It is really absurd for us to arrogate the wisdom of knowing what’s good for us. Not everybody would allow even that hard work is good for us.”

– Henry Holt
(1840-1926)

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Michael E. Tymn, Editor
641 Keolu Dr.
Kailua, HI 96734
(808)262-6604
metgat@aol.com

For non-editorial matters, contact:

Paul Hauser, J.D., Executive Administrator
P. O. Box 84
Loxahatchee, Florida, 33420 USA
(561) 714-1423
pauljhauser@gmail.com
<http://www.ascsi.org/>

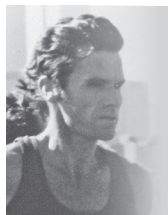
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New Members

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Practicing Death

To practice death is to practice freedom — Michel de Montaigne



The Spirit-Science Conundrum: Identifying the Real Tricksters

As many of the pioneering psychical researchers, including William James, hypothesized, the so-called “spirit control” of the trance medium was really a “secondary personality” surfacing from the medium’s subconscious. This *alter* personality had the ability to access information from the minds of the sitters as well as from some “cosmic reservoir” — one that recorded everything there was to know about the person — and then dupe the person sitting with the medium into believing that it was a dead relative or friend communicating.

When George Pellew, a member of the American Society for Psychical Research, began communicating through Leonora Piper shortly after his accidental death in 1892, at age 31, some key researchers began to believe that G.P., as he was referred to, was really a spirit and not a “dream creation” of Piper’s subconscious. There was too much personality, too many similar mannerisms, too much give-and-take dialogue, too much dramatic realism associated with G.P.’s communication to believe that he was a secondary personality. Nevertheless, some researchers, including James, continued to sit on the fence when it came to the spirit hypothesis, very likely because it was too religiously simplistic and not scientific.

Alfred Russel Wallace, co-originator with Charles Darwin of the natural selection theory of evolution, did not accept the subconscious explanation. He asked why this subconscious “other personality” was *pretending* to be a deceased human being with so many mediums. How did all these subconscious personalities conspire in this worldwide deception? What was their objective? One skeptical researcher suggested that it was the “survival instinct” in man which gave rise to the deception, but how humans came by this instinct was another question. Was there a master programmer, a “God” behind it all...a God not offering an afterlife? Wallace saw no foundation for such an instinct under the evolutionary ideas he subscribed to.

More modern researchers often mention the case of “Philip,” an imaginary ghost supposedly created by a group of Canadian amateur researchers during the 1970s. Many parapsychologists have concluded from this case and other similar experiments that discarnates are not involved. The phenomena, they believe, are all manifestations of the minds of the living humans involved in the experiment.

But a hundred years before Philip was created, French researcher Alan Kardec had experienced

much the same thing and was told by more advanced spirits that mischievous (i.e., earthbound) spirits are responsible for such deception. “These light spirits multiply around us and seize every occasion to mingle in the communication,” Kardec wrote. “Truth is the least of their care; this is why they take a roguish pleasure in mystifying those who are weak, and who sometimes presume to believe their word. Persons who take pleasure in such communication naturally give access to light and



Pellew

deceiving spirits.”

Kardec asked a seemingly advanced spirit if animals can communicate. The spirit responded that they can’t. Kardec pointed out that there had been some purported communication from animals. The spirit replied: “Invoke a stone and it will answer you. There is always a crowd of spirits ready to speak for anything.”

Kardec further explained his understanding of the matter: “Just the same if you invoke a myth, or an allegorical personage, it will answer; that is, it will be answered for, and the spirit who would present himself would take its character and appearance. (*Like Philip?*) One day, a person took a fancy to invoke Tartufe, and Tartufe came immediately; still more, he talked of Orgon, of Elmire, of Damis, and of Valire, of whom he gave news; as to himself, he counterfeited the hypocrite with as much art as if Tartufe had been a real personage. Afterward, he said he was the spirit of an actor who had played that character.”

Kardec continued: “Trifling spirits always profit by the inexperience of interrogators, but they take good care never to address those who they know are enlightened enough to discover their imposturer, and who would give no credit to their stories. It is the same among men.”

In effect, we seemingly are left with three possibilities: 1) *all* mediums are tricksters; 2) the *alter* personalities in the subconscious of many trance mediums are tricksters; 3) *some* spirits are tricksters. Since science will never recognize spirits, it is stuck with the first two alternatives, and therein is the unsolvable conundrum.

— Michael Tymn



The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc.
P.O. Box 84
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All-Star Line-Up Ready for Scottsdale Conference

The Afterlife Research and Education Section of the Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies will hold its first annual conference September 25-27 at the Embassy Suites in Scottsdale, Arizona. The topic is *Life in the Afterlife*. The early-bird fee until July 15, 2015, is \$195. For details and reservations, link to <http://www.AfterlifeResearchAndEducation.org> or call (800) 690-4232.

The conference will have 25 experts in various aspects of the afterlife speaking about life in the afterlife. The keynote speaker will be Gary E. Schwartz, Ph.D., speaking on *The State of Afterlife Research Today*. George Noory, host of *Coast to Coast AM* will speak about his book and guests he has had on *Coast to Coast AM*. Afterward, he will sit informally to talk with people.

David Thompson, world-renowned materialization medium, will give a demonstration of trance mediumship, in which a person from the afterlife speaks through him to the audience. He will also hold two séances. During the séances, people materialize, walk around the room, and talk with participants, objects will whirl around the room, celebrities such as Louis Armstrong may visit, and deceased loved ones will materialize and speak to the people attending who have been separated from them by death.

Mark Anthony, the psychic lawyer, will speak about the evidence reaffirming that God exists, Heaven exists, the soul is an immortal living spirit, and communication

with spirits is possible. Other speakers will speak about the period before the transition, immediately afterward, and in the days that follow, entities, earthbounds, demons, ghosts, and ETs that influence people, how loved ones, angels, and guides communicate with us, what everyday life is like on the next plane of life, the soul, life plans, reincarnation, past lives, judgment, punishment, in the afterlife.

Workshops will be held on *How to Use the Pendulum to Communicate with Loved Ones in the Afterlife*, *How to Use a Black Mirror to Communicate*, *Recognizing Your Soul Seeds in Dreams*, *Spiritual Experiences*, *Illness*, and *Grief*, *Understanding the Anatomy and Physiology of Your Soul*, *How Soul Communication Works*, and *Exploring the Afterlife*.

Presenters include Carla Wills-Brandon, M.A., Bruce Moen, Rosemary Ellen Guiley, Peter Wright, M.A., Ellie Pechet, M.Ed., Savarna Wiley, M.A., Susanne Wilson, M.A., Jamie Turndorf, Ph.D., Kim Sheridan, Patricia McGivern, Anne Puryear, D.D., Donna Smith-Moncrieffe, CrimDip, M.S., Carol Morgan, Miles Allen, Herb Puryear, Ph.D., Dick Sutphen, CCHT, Karen Herrick, Ph.D., Rob Schwartz, Hypnotist, Stafford Betty, Ph.D., Ineke Koedam, Rhonda Eklund-Schwartz, and Melinda Vail.

There will be special panels for hospice workers and grief support workers.

—R. Craig Hogan